which Indian companies should be allowed to uplink from Indian soil;

(b) Whether "private broadcaster are divided on uplink" as reported in the H.T., dated 21.5.98 and that their meeting with Ministry's official recently ended with divided opinion; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) What is Government's opinion/thinking in this regard and reasons for delay in granting uplinking facilities to Indian companies who want early permission?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Government have decided to permit Indian Satellite Channel to uplink from Indian soil through VSNL. All private Channel Operators presently "On air" unanimously welcomed this decision to allow uplinking from Indian soil.

(c) Does not arise.

**Harmonium Performers of Carnatic Music**

3032. DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether harmonium solo performers of Carnatic music are forbidden from playing the instrument in All India Radio;

(b) if so, the reasons for this discrimination; and

(c) whether with the good harmoniums now available performers will be given contracts as with other musicians?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no discrimination. Only "A" grade artists are allowed solo performance in All India Radio. At present there is no "A" grade harmonium artist in All India Radio panel.

(c) After the introduction of the system of audition for harmonium artists also, all graded artists, depending on their grades, are offered bookings as per the requirement of the station.

**Independent Radio/TV Facilities for Amritsar**

3033. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Amritsar town is not adequately covered by All India Radio, Jalandhar transmitter;

(b) whether it is a fact that Amritsar falls in its skip-distance and its signal in the town is weak; if so, what steps are being taken to remedy this age old malady; and

(c) considering the importance of Amritsar as pilgrimage, cultural, educational and commercial centre, whether there is any plan to provide it with independent Radio and TV facilities to cater to the Majha region?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Amritsar town is fully covered by the High Power Medium Wave Transmitters of All India Radio at Jalandhar.

(b) There is no skip zone in medium wave coverage.

(c) No, Sir.

***Following CCS Rules in CCW, Air***

3034. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether, Civil Construction Wing (CCW) All India Radio, still follow the Central Civil Service rules, instructions of personnel Department and Fifth Pay Commission, in service matters;